

**What is claimed is:**

1. An assessment system for assessing a company comprising:
  - 5           a. a geographical location stage operative to derive geographical data representative of the geographical location of one or more shareholders of the company, and
  - b. an analysis stage operative to analyse the geographical data to provide an indication of the investment potential of shares of the company.
- 10       2. An assessment system according to claim 1 in which the geographical location stage is further operative to determine the geographical location of one or more persons connected with the company.
3. An assessment system according to claim 2 in which the or each person is a director of the company.
- 15       4. An assessment system according to claim 3 in which the analysis stage is operative to analyse geographical location of one or more shareholders in relation to the geographical location of one or more persons connected with the company.
5. An assessment system according to claim 1 in which the geographical location stage comprises a database in which an address can be looked up in order to determine the geographical location of the address.
- 20       6. An assessment system according to claim 5 in which the database comprises a database of the geographical location of postal codes.

7. An assessment system according to claim 6 in which the database includes a specification of the geographical location of a postal code to a degree of accuracy that is of the same order as a street address.
8. An assessment system according to claim 1 operative to analyse the family relationships that might exist between shareholders and directors and employees of a company.
9. An assessment system according to claim 1 that includes a display stage that is capable of producing a display that is representative of data produced by the geographical location stage and/or the analysis stage.
10. An assessment system according to claim 9 in which the display stage produces the display in combination with a display of a geographical map.
11. An assessment system according to claim 10 in which items within the display are produced to have a visual appearance that is representative of qualitative properties of the data.
12. An assessment system according claim 1 in which the analysis stage is operative to base its analysis only on shareholders that are natural persons.
13. An assessment system according to claim 1 constituted in software executing on suitable computer hardware.
14. A method of assessing the investment potential of shares of a company comprising making a geographical analysis of the location of the shareholders of the company and assessing the investment potential of shares of the company on the basis of the results of the geographical analysis.
15. A method according to claim 14 in which the geographical analysis includes determining the geographical location of one or more persons connected with the company.
16. A method according to claim 15 in which such person or persons may be director(s) of the company.

17. A method according to claim 16 in which the geographical analysis analyses the geographical location of one or more shareholders in relation to the geographical location of one or more persons connected with the company.
18. A method according to claim 17 in which the geographical analysis makes reference to a database to look up an address in order to determine the geographical location of the address, and therefore of a person that has that address.
19. A method according to claim 18 in which the database comprises a database of the geographical location of postal codes.
20. A method according to claim 19 further including a step of analysing family relationships that might exist between shareholders and directors and employees of a company.
21. A method according to claim 20 that further includes producing generating a display that is representative of data produced by the geographical location stage and/or the analysis stage.
22. A method according to claim 21 in which the display is produced in combination with a display of a geographical map.
23. A method according to claim 22 in which items within the display are produced to have a visual appearance that is representative of qualitative or quantitative properties of the data.
24. A method according to claim 23 in which the geographical analysis excludes from consideration predetermined classes of shareholders.
25. A method according to claim 24 in which the geographical analysis excludes corporate and nominee shareholders.
26. A method according to claim 24 in which only shareholders that are natural persons are included in the analysis.

27. A method according to claim 25 further comprising the step of considering the results of the geographical analysis to provide a list of recommended companies for investment.
- 5 28. A method according to claim 27 in which the consideration of the geographical results includes identification of clusters of shareholders of a company in the region of an office of the company or of its advisors, being one or more of its accountants, PR agents, brokers or market-makers in the shares.
- 10 29. A method according to claim 28 in which a cluster is identified where a geographical area has a number of shareholders in a given area more than a threshold above an average expected value for that area.
30. A method according to claim 29 in which a cluster is identified where a geographical area has a number of employee shareholders in a given area more than a threshold above an average expected value for that area.
- 15 31. A publication that lists recommended companies derived by a method according to claim 14.
32. A computer software product executable on suitable computer hardware to perform a method according to claim 14.
- 20 33. A display system for generating a visual display that represents a geographical analysis of the location of a company, its advisors and its shareholders, the method optionally being in accordance with claim 14.